NUMB. CCCCLIII.

The SPECTATOR.

Non usitatâ nec tenui ferar
Pennâ ——— Hor.

Saturday, August 9. 1712.

THERE is not a more pleasing Exercise of the Mind than Gratitude. It is accompanied with such an inward Satisfaction, that the Duty is sufficiently rewarded by the Performance. It is not like the Practice of many other Virtues, difficult and painful, but attended with so much Pleasure, that were there no positive Command which enjoin'd it, nor any Recompence laid up for it hereafter, a Generous Mind wou'd indulge in it, for the natural Gratification that accompanies it.

Gratitude is due from Man to Man, how much more from Man to his Maker? The Supream Being does not only confer upon us those Bounties which we receive more immediately from his Hand, but even those Benefits which are conver'd to us by others. Every thing we enjoy, by what Means soever it may be deriv'd upon us, is the Gift of him who is the Author of Good, and Father of Mercies.

Gratitude, when exerted towards one another, not only produces a very pleasing Sensation in the Breast of a Grateful Man; it exalts the Soul into Rapture when it is employ'd on this great Object of Gratitude, on this Beneficent Being who has given us every thing we already possess, and from whom we expect every thing we yet hope for.

Most of the Works of the Pagan Poets were either direct Hymns to their Deities, or tended indirectly to the Celebration of their respective Attributes and Perfections. Those who are acquainted with the Works of the *Greek* and *Latin* Poets which are extant, will upon Reflection find this Observation so true, that I shall not enlarge upon it. One wou'd wonder that more of our Christian Poets have not turned their Thoughts this way, especially if we consider, that our Idea of the Supreme Being is not only infinitely more Great and Noble than what could possibly enter into the Heart of an Heathen, but filled with every thing that can raise the Imagination, and give an Opportunity for the Sublimest Thoughts and Conceptions.

Plutarch tells us of a Heathen that was singing an Hymn to *Diana*, in which he celebrated her for her delight in Human Sacrifices, and other Instances of Cruelty and Revenge; upon which a Poet who was present at this piece of Devotion, and seems to have had a truer Idea of the Divine Nature, (I think it was *Epicharmus*) told the Votary by way of reproof, that in recompence for his Hymn, he heartily wished he might have a Daughter of the same Temper with the Goddess he celebrated. It was indeed impossible to write the Praises of one of those false Deities, according to the Pagan Creed, without a mixture of Impertinence and Absurdity.

The *Jews*, who before the Times of Christianity were the only People that had the Knowledge of the True God, have set the Christian World an Example how they ought to employ this Divine Talent of which I am speaking. As that Nation produced Men of great Genius, without considering them as Inspired Writers, they have transmitted to us many Hymns and Divine Odes, which excell those that are deliver'd down to us by the Ancient *Greeks* and *Romans* in the Poetry, as much as in the Subject to which it was consecrated. This I think might easily be shewn, if there were occasion for it.

I have already obliged the Publick with some Pieces of Divine Poetry which have fallen into my Hands, and as they have met with the Reception which they deserved, I shall from time to time com-

communicate any Work of the ſame Nature which has not appeared in Print, and may be acceptable to my Readers.

I.

WHEN all thy Mercies, O my God,
My riſing Soul ſurveys;
Tranſported with the View, I'm loſt
In Wonder, Love, and Praiſe:

II.

O how ſhall Words with equal Warmth
The Gratitude declare
That glows within my Raviſh'd Heart!
But Thou canſt read it there.

III.

Thy Providence my Life ſuſtain'd
And all my Wants redreſt,
When in the ſilent Womb I lay,
And hung upon the Breaſt.

IV.

To all my weak Complaints and Cries
Thy Mercy lent an Ear,
Ere yet my feeble Thoughts had learnt
To form themſelves in Pray'r.

V.

Unnumber'd Comforts to my Soul
Thy tender Care beſtow'd,
Before my Infant Heart conceiv'd
From whom thoſe Comforts flow'd.

VI.

When in the ſlipp'ry Paths of Youth
With heedleſs Steps I ran,
Thine Arm unſeen convey'd me ſafe
And led me up to Man.

VII.

Through hidden Dangers, Toils, and Deaths,
It gently clear'd my Way,
And through the pleaſing Snares of Vice,
More to be fear'd than they.

VIII.

When worn with Sickneſs oft haſt Thou
With Health renew'd my Face,
And when in Sins and Sorrows ſunk
Reviv'd my Soul with Grace.

IX.

Thy bounteous Hand with worldly Bliſs
Has made my Cup run o'er,
And in a kind and faithful Friend
Has doubled all my Store.

X.

Ten thouſand thouſand precious Gifts
My Daily Thanks employ,
Nor is the leaſt a chearful Heart,
That taſtes thoſe Gifts with Joy.

XI.

Through ev'ry Period of my Life
Thy Goodneſs I'll purſue,
And after Death in diſtant Worlds
The glorious Theme renew.

XII.

When Nature fails, and Day and Night
Divide thy Works no more,
My Ever-grateful Heart, O Lord,
Thy Mercy ſhall adore.

XIII.

Through all Eternity to Thee
A joyful Song I'll raiſe,
For oh! Eternity's too ſhort
To utter all thy Praiſe.

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